

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 210994

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TO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA NIACT IMMEDIATE

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FOR UNDER SECRETARY ROGERS AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFELLE

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XA, US

SUBJECT: EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN "LAST HOPE FOR RHODESIA?"

1. HERewith EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN WHICH APPEARED IN WASHINGTON POST AUGUST 25. PRESS GUIDANCE FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.

2. THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING QUIET US SUPPORT FOR A DESPERATE LAST-HOPE PLAN, BACKED BY A FEW INFLUENTIAL RHODESIAN BLACKS AND WHITES, TO ATTEMPT QUICK BLACK-MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA WITHOUT MASS KILLINGS IN AN ESCALATING GUERRILLA WAR AND WITHOUT FLIGHT OF WHITE ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND SKILLS.

3. THE HEART OF THE PLAN: A SYSTEM OF RICH ECONOMIC REWARDS TO PERSUADE THE COUNTRY'S 270,000 WHITES TO STAY IN RHODESIA AFTER BLACK-MAJORITY RULE.

4. ANY COMPROMISE IS OPPOSED BY INCREASINGLY POWERFUL BLACK GUERRILLA LEADERS WHO REFUSE TO GUARANTEE ANYTHING FOR THE WHITES AND BY MILITANT WHITES DOMINATING PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH'S GOVERNMENT WHO RESPOND BY PROMISING NEVER TO GIVE AN INCH.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 210994

5. NEVERTHELESS, THE PLAN IS BACKED BY ONE KEY FACTION IN THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC), WHICH REPRESENTS MOST OF THE COUNTRY'S 7 MILLION BLACKS, AND BY A SMALL INFLUENTIAL GROUP OF WHITES WHO HOPE ULTIMATELY TO CONVINCE SMITH. UNLIKELY THOUGH THE PLAN'S CHANCES ARE, HIGH US OFFICIALS TAKE IT SERIOUSLY ENOUGH TO CONSIDER BACKING IT WITH MONEY AND PRESTIGE AS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO BLOODY TRAGEDY.

6. BEHIND THE PLAN IS THE CONVICTION THAT BLACK RULE IS INEVITABLE, AND WILL COME IN ONE OF TWO WAYS: FROM COMMUNIST-SUPPORTED GUERRILLA WAR DESTROYING THE WHITE-CONTROLLED ECONOMIC STRUCTURE; OR FROM BLACK-WHITE COOPERATION PRESERVING THE BENEFITS OF A RICH ECONOMY--FOR THE NEW BLACK GOVERNMENT AND FOR WHITES WHO ARE PERSUADED TO REMAIN BY ECONOMIC REWARDS. THE FORMER AVENUE IS THE OVERWHELMING PROBABILITY TODAY.

7. IF THIS TREND CONTINUES, WITH BLACK AFRICA COMMITTED TO A MILITARY SOLUTION IN RHODESIA, THE ENTIRE WESTERN POSITION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL BE THREATENED. THE DEFEAT OF THE US AND WESTERN EUROPE WHEN POWER WAS SEIZED BY SOVIET-BACKED BLACK NATIONALISTS IN ANGOLA DID NOT APPROACH THE POLITICAL POTENCY OF A COMMUNIST-BACKED VICTORY IN RHODESIA.

8. TO AVOID THAT CALAMITY, THE PLAN NOW UNDER SCRUTINY SETS UP A WESTERN CONSORTIUM, HEADED BY THE US, TO GUARANTEE RHODESIAN WHITES ON TWO MAJOR POINTS: FIRST, NO EXPROPRIATION WITHOUT FAIR COMPENSATION; SECOND, THE RIGHT OF WHITES TO REMOVE PROPORTIONALLY MORE ASSETS FROM THE COUNTRY THE LONGER THEY STAYED.

9. ONE NEW POLITICAL FACTOR GIVING THE PLAN A DESPERATE URGENCY IS THE RISING POWER OF BLACK NATIONALIST GUERRILLA LEADERS TRAINED, EQUIPPED AND SUPPLIED BY PEKING OR MOSCOW-BLOC COMMUNISTS. THE MILITARY MEN ARE SUBMERGING THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE TWO MAIN NATIONALIST FACTIONS: ZANU (THE ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION) AND ZAPU (ZIMBABWE AFRICAN PEOPLE'S UNION).

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PAGE 03 STATE 210994

10. THE GUERRILLA LEADERS WANT TOTAL POWER AND MILITARY RULE; THE BLACK POLITICIANS CLAIM A MUCH-DIFFERENT OBJECTIVE: THE RIGHT OF BLACKS TO VOTE AND HENCE TO TAKE MAJORITY POWER, WITH THE WHITES REMAINING AS A VITAL FORCE IN THE ECONOMY.

11. AS BLACK NATIONALIST PRESSURES SHIFT MORE AND MORE

TOWARD MILITARY SOLUTIONS, POLITICAL PROGRESS OBVIOUSLY

GETS MORE DIFFICULT. NEVERTHELESS, THE ALTERNATIVE TO POLITICAL PROGRESS IN RHODESIA IS A LONG, MUTUALLY DESTRUCTIVE WAR.

12. UNLIKE AFRICA'S EX-COLONIES NOW UNDER BLACK RULE, RHODESIA HAS NOT BEEN ADMINISTERED BY AN OUTSIDE COUNTRY SINCE 1923. NO OUTSIDE POWER CAN CALL THE POLITICAL TURN THERE AS PORTUGAL CALLED IT FOR ANGOLA, UNILATERALLY ENDING ITS RULE AND GRANTING INDEPENDENCE.

13. TO THE CONTRARY, RHODESIA'S MILITARY PROBABLY CAN WITHSTAND GUERRILLA ATTACKS FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS. NO EXPERT DOUBTS THAT, BARRING A POLITICAL COMPROMISE, RHODESIA WILL FIGHT UNTIL THE LAST BULLET HAS BEEN FIRED OR THE LAST WHITE KILLED TO PRESERVE A SOCIETY AND ECONOMY BUILT BY A HANDFUL OF WHITE SETTLERS.

14. IT MAY BE TOO MUCH TO HOPE THAT ANY SENSIBLE PLAN STILL HAS TIME TO WIN POLITICAL BACKING, GIVEN THE RACIAL PASSIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA TODAY. BUT WITHOUT IT, THE OUTCOME IS RACIAL WAR WHICH COULD SEND ITS SPARKS FAR BEYOND RHODESIA. THAT IS WHY COOL-HEADED OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON ARE WILLING TO STUDY ANYTHING WITH EVEN A SLIM CHANCE OF AVERTING THE CATASTROPHE. KISSINGER

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